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**Rundell. The Work of Vital Religion in the
Soul . 1845**

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Samuel Fuller

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE COMMENCEMENT AND PROGRESS OF THE

WORK OF VITAL RELIGION

IN THE SOUL.

ON

DIVINE WORSHIP.

AND ON THE

PARTAKING OF THE FLESH AND BLOOD
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

BY

SAMUEL RUNDLELL.

THIRD EDITION.



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INTRODUCTION.

WHEN we look around us, and observe how many conflicting creeds and systems of religion are sedulously propagated in the present day, our reflections on the subject should lead us to appreciate duly the privileges with which, through divine love and mercy, we are favoured ; the Light of Christ being given to illuminate our minds, and the Holy Scriptures being placed within our reach, to which we can refer for instruction. In the Sacred Record, the doctrine preached by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, on the subject of the Redemption and Salvation of Man, is clearly exhibited. As no other subject of equal interest and importance can be presented to us, may these few pages, designed to point out from this high authority the way by which all mankind may come to the knowledge of the Truth, and be saved, prove the means, under the divine blessing, not only of convincing the merely nominal Christian of

INTRODUCTION.

the imminent danger he is in ; but also of encouraging the weak yet sincere believer, to hold fast the “ grain ” of living faith ; (Matt. xvii. 20) that so, amid all the conflicts with which he may be proved, his confidence may be steadily fixed on Him, who is the “ Wisdom of God, and the Power of God.” (1 Cor. i. 24.) By submission to His command, “ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; ” and, by the consequent fulfilment of his gracious promise, “ ye shall find rest unto your souls,” (Matt. xi. 29) the sincere believer will be enabled eventually to adopt the ancient language, “ The Lord is my light, and my salvation ; whom shall I fear ? The Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ? ” (Psalm xxvii. 1.)

OBSERVATIONS,

ETC.

CHAPTER I.

ON CONVERSION, AND REGENERATION.

WHEN our Lord JESUS CHRIST was transfigured on the mount, the voice from the excellent glory bore witness of him, saying, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; Hear ye Him,*" (2 Pet. i. 17. Matt. xvii. 5;) —HE, whose doctrine we are thus commanded to hear, and of course reverently to embrace, declared, (John iii. 16) "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17th) For God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world; but that the world, through him, might be saved. (18th) He that believeth on him, is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (19th) And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20th) For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. (21st) But

he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."*

By this highly important declaration of our holy Redeemer, it appears, that the salvation of God through him, is not limited to any particular class or portion of mankind; for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, "that the world, through him, might be saved." The Son of God "tasted death for every man;" (Heb. ii. 9) and his salvation is partaken of by

* In the 16th verse of the above quotation, faith in the Son of God is set forth as necessary to the obtaining everlasting life. In the 18th verse, condemnation is represented as the result of unbelief in his name. In the 19th and 20th verses, the cause of condemnation is more particularly described, being declared to consist in the not loving, but hating, which of course includes the not believing in, the light. Hence it appears, that in this very important passage of Scripture, *the light* should be regarded as the spiritual manifestation of the Son of God in the soul of man; "I, (said Christ) am the light of the world." (John, viii. 12.) The light may also be considered as one of the divine attributes, which are comprised in the name of the Son of God. In taking this view of the subject, there is no essential discordance in the several parts of this portion of the doctrine of our holy Redeemer, respecting the object of faith: Christ, the ever blessed Son of God, is the object of saving faith; and this faith, when first brought forth in the newly awakened soul, is very small, even comparable to "a grain of mustard-seed;" yet it is sufficient to enable the humble recipients, to believe in Christ revealed in their souls, under the manifestation of "the light." Through "the obedience of faith," they witness its gradual increase, and they become capable of believing in Christ, in respect of all his other gracious offices as set forth in the holy Scriptures, if they have access to that sacred record. The believing in "the light" is expressly enjoined by our Saviour in the text. (John xii. 36.)

Now here we behold an evident illustration, both of the love, and also of the justice of Almighty God, who does not condemn any of the children of men for their unbelief of a theological truth, of which no certain knowledge or conviction is impressed on their minds: for the spiritual manifestation of Christ, in which all mankind should believe, does enlighten all; and those only are condemned, who do not love, but on the contrary through unbelief hate the light, and reject its admonitions. The light, or Spirit of Christ, reproves them for sin, but they refuse to forsake it; and in order to escape from reproof, they reject the divine reprover; so that their condemnation is just, and they are left without excuse.

every one who truly and availingly *believes in his name*. Now the name of the Son of God, in this and in many other places of the New Testament, appears to signify, or have reference to, his divine attributes, viz. his power, life, light, &c.* and this light being "the life" of "the Word," or Son of God, is that "true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John i. 4—9.)

By this light, shining in the hearts of all the children of men, they are, at seasons, reprov'd and convicted of sin; "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. iii. 23.) They who do not reject this light, are enabled to see the miserable state they are in while unregenerate, being in bondage under the power of sin, and defiled by its pollution. Deeply humbled by this view of their own real condition, their hearts are contrited,—they are brought to repentance;—and the cry is raised, "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke, xviii. 13.) Abiding in patient submission, under the operation of the divine power, they are prepared for the reception of an increased manifestation of the light of the Word, or Spirit of Christ, whereby faith, (which is its fruit, and which in some degree had been previously exercised,) is now more fully confirmed. Thus the work of conversion advances in those who do not reject the appearance of the light, which is the free gift or "grace" of God. (Titus, ii. 11.) By the operation of his power, the eyes of the mentally blind are in degree opened, and some true sensibility is imparted to their souls. They are brought to feel more deeply, the inestimable value of a Saviour; and, coming to him in faith, through the attraction of the love of God,†

* See Cruden's Concordance under "Name," also Barclay's Apology, Tuke's Principles, Bates' Doctrines; the three last under the article "Baptism."

† "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." (John vi. 44.)

they are favored to experience the baptism of his Spirit; witnessing the remission of their past sins through His blood, who is "the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." (1 John, ii. 2.) They who thus walk in the light of Christ, in "the obedience of faith," are enabled, like the believers formerly, "to joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ;" by whom they receive "the atonement," or reconciliation with God. Rom. v. 11.) Abiding under the baptism of the Spirit, its cleansing operation progresses in their hearts; the motives—the secret springs to action—are purified from the alloy of sin, however specious the form under which it lurks. This process, in the figurative language of Scripture, is said to be "with fire." (Luke, iii. 16.)

The soul-satisfying peace and joy, which these have found to result from believing in, and obeying, the light or Spirit of Christ, engage them still to adhere to its manifestations; they submit not only their words and actions, but also the thoughts and desires of their hearts, to its righteous scrutiny and decision; so that every sinful thought and desire, every idle word, and every evil deed, are brought unto judgment. They see, in this light, that there is much more to be effected in their hearts, by the "refiner's fire," (Mal. iii. 2) than previously they had any conception of; and they are made sensible, that this purifying process must be endured, in order that the selfishness, pride and haughtiness, with all other evil affections and lusts, which the tempter strives to excite and foster in their hearts, may be fully subdued, and made to give place to the righteousness, the love, the purity, the meekness and the gentleness of Christ. Amidst their many besetments, by watching unto prayer, and by patiently waiting on the Lord in spirit, an increase of strength is received, and they are enabled to hold on their way.—Continuing to follow the light of Christ in the *path of*

self-denial,—taking up their daily cross, (Luke ix. 23,) and not conforming themselves to the vain customs, fashions, and maxims of this world,—nor fixing their affections on its riches or pleasures,—but breaking off from, and avoiding, every thing which the light discovers to be evil, they gradually witness the advancement of *the new birth* in their souls:—old things pass away, and all things become new. (2 Cor. v. 17.) The floor of the heart, figuratively speaking, becomes cleansed; and the chaff burnt up “with unquenchable fire.” (Matt. iii. 12.) Having thus received Christ Jesus the Lord, he giveth them “power to become the sons of God, (this grace being dispensed) to them that believe on *his name*.” (John i. 12.)

The preceding description of the commencement, and progress of conversion, is not put forth as an exact delineation of the steps, by which *every one* is conducted, in whom this important work has been accomplished. The degree of depravity, by which the human character is marked, previously to conversion, is much greater in some cases, than in others. The repugnance, also, of the natural disposition to submit to the control and guidance of the light of Christ, and thus to come under his yoke, varies greatly in different persons; and consequently a corresponding variation may be requisite, in the duration, and in the intensity, of “the refiner’s fire.” And when individuals of a serious disposition have embraced doctrines which, by leading them to place an undue stress on outward forms and ceremonies, do really obstruct their coming to Christ, their prejudices are not easily overcome; these have to pass through a time of stripping—of breaking to pieces all those things, however highly esteemed, the tendency of which is to prevent their receiving Christ in the simplicity and humility of little children. (Matt. xviii. 3.) It may be expected, therefore, under this great diversity of

character, that in the process of conversion, there would be "diversities of operations:—but it is the same God, which worketh all in all." (1 Cor. xii. 6.)

The foregoing view of faith in the name of the Son of God appears to have been *set forth by Him* in the latter part of that memorable portion of Scripture, with which this chapter commences. When our holy Redeemer had declared, "He that believeth not, is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God; (John iii. 18) he proceeded, as already observed, still more particularly to point out *the cause* of condemnation: for he immediately added, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." From these words of our blessed Saviour, it may be inferred, that although professed Christians may be very assiduous in acquiring the literal knowledge of the doctrines contained in the Holy Scriptures, and may profess an unlimited confidence in the benefits resulting from the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ; yet if they persist in disregarding and rejecting the admonitions of the light, which at seasons shines in their hearts, in order to their being delivered from the power of sin, and cleansed from its pollution; they do not, according to his doctrine, truly *believe in his name*, and consequently they are in a state of condemnation. For such persons to conclude, while they remain in this state of unbelief and disobedience, that because they profess a faith in the personal appearance, sufferings, and death of Christ, therefore they are cleansed from their sins in his blood, and are justified in his sight, would be indeed a lamentable and dangerous delusion.

In the texts before quoted from the sacred record, the Saviour of the world briefly, yet in clear and emphatic language, *preached the doctrine of the light*; showing, that this divine gift is embraced and adhered to, by every one who "doeth" or walketh in the path of "truth;" and that it is hated by all who do evil; who reject it, in order to escape from its convictions. Now, these two classes comprehend all mankind; and therefore it is clear, that this divine gift is dispensed unto all. Evil men could not hate or reject the light, if it did not in some degree illuminate their minds, reproving them on account of their evil deeds. Their not believing in, nor loving the light—refusing to hearken unto, and to obey its admonitions—gratifying their corrupt propensities by continuing in their evil ways,—*this* is the ground of their condemnation—the cause of their exclusion from that salvation, which is by and through Jesus Christ. On the other hand, they who walk in the paths of "truth" and righteousness, in the obedience of faith, following the guidance of the light, ordering their conduct and conversation according to its dictates,—all who take this course and persevere therein, are brought out from the darkness and death of our fallen nature, and are made partakers of the salvation of God, through Jesus Christ their Redeemer. (See 1 John i. 7.)

But although all mankind may be comprised in these two classes, yet it is a truth clearly deducible from the doctrines of Scripture, that individuals may pass from either of these classes into the other. Those who have begun to walk in the paths of truth and righteousness, and even such as have made considerable advancement in a religious life, may, by not abiding in the fear of God, and in obedience to his holy will, fall into temptation, and be overcome thereby, and thus become evil doers. (Ezek. xxxiii. 18. 1 Cor. ix. 27.) So also, if individuals of the latter description, before the day of mercy passes away, happily embrace the renewed

visitations of a long-suffering and gracious God, they may undoubtedly, through sincere repentance and faith in his Son Jesus Christ, be cleansed from the pollution of sin, and be brought into a state of reconciliation and favour with God. Thus the declaration of the Apostle to the Corinthians will be applicable to them; when describing various kinds of evil doers, he adds, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. vi. 11.)

Among other declarations of Christ, in accordance with the foregoing, are these: "I am the Light of the world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John viii. 12.) To some of the Jews who, through unbelief, were in danger of having this divine gift taken from them, he said, "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." "While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." (John xii. 35, 36.) These declarations of Christ, in which he represents himself under the character of "the Light," appear to have reference to him, principally as that divine Word, the life of which, as the Apostle declares, is "the light of men." (John i. 4.) By the operation of this Word, the work of regeneration is effected in them who believe, and walk in its light. They are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter i. 23.) Thus they become children of light—in other words, true Christians.

It may further be observed, that all who believe in the light of Christ, and walk in obedience to its manifestations from day to day, fully participate in the benefits procured by the sufferings and death of the Redeemer. "*If we walk in the light,*" said the Apostle, "*as he is in the light,* we have fellowship one with another, and *the blood of*

Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) Hence it appears that the being cleansed from all sin, by the blood of Christ, is the blessed privilege of those who walk in the light.

Christ is the gift of God unto mankind, not only in respect of his outward, or personal appearance, sufferings, and death, but also in respect of his spiritual manifestation in their hearts. The Almighty declares, "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth." (Isa. xlix. 6.) His salvation is freely offered unto all; but it is partaken of by those only, who in humility of mind receive and obey this manifestation of his holy light, or Spirit; and embracing the faith, which is its fruit, are baptized in or into the name—the life and power, of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:—as it is written, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." (Mark, xvi. 16.) The faith of these will necessarily embrace the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, if they have access to this invaluable record respecting the birth, life, doctrine, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Holy Redeemer; for the gift of the light, or Spirit of Christ, (especially with respect to the increased measure, in which it is vouchsafed under the Christian dispensation,) is altogether to be ascribed to the efficacy of that which Christ, in his appearance in the flesh, did and suffered for the human race. Thus the benefits of the "one offering," are not depreciated, but are *more completely* exalted by the doctrine of the manifestation of the Spirit, or universal saving light and grace.

It is evidently the practice of the wicked one, to endeavour, by various stratagems, to induce the children of men to shut up their hearts against the influence of the light, or Spirit of Christ; and as far as he succeeds in this design, so far he maintains his evil power and dominion in the world. If, for instance, the subtle adversary, in order

to effect his purpose, can so far beguile any of the professors of Christianity, as to instil into their minds, a secret aversion to the heart-searching manifestation of the light of Christ; and if, by following up the advantage he has gained, he can induce them to affix on this doctrine, the stigma of enthusiasm, or fanaticism, it then becomes easy for him to persuade them to disregard and to reject altogether, the admonitory dictates of this divine teacher in their own minds, in order that he may without restraint bring forth his own works of darkness in their hearts. But He who was manifested "to take away our sins," was also "manifested to destroy" these "works of the devil." When this blessed light of Christ is believed in, and allowed freely to shine in our hearts, the works of the adversary, at their very origin, are clearly detected; and if its warnings and requisitions are embraced, we are enabled, through the power which it imparts, to "overcome the wicked one" in his various devices,—“to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” (Titus ii. 11, 12.)

The great importance of this divine gift unto mankind, appears very evident, in the account given of it by our Lord Jesus Christ, in the texts which have been already quoted. The apostolic epistles also, furnish corroborating testimony, by the designations under which they describe it, and by the effects which they attribute to it. In the Epistle to the Corinthians, it is declared, that "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, *hath shined in our hearts*, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face (or manifestation) of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (2 Cor. iv. 6, 7.) The same Apostle describes this divine gift also, as "The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, and hath appeared unto all men." (Titus ii. 11, 12.) He

also represents it as "the Spirit of God" or "of Christ." (Romans viii. 9.) "A manifestation whereof, is given to every man to profit withal." (1 Cor. xii. 7.) It is also called "the Anointing," which teacheth of all things. (1 John ii. 27.) "Christ in you the hope of glory." (Col. i. 27.) The 5th verse in the 13th chap. 2 Cor. is very emphatic: "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves; know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.* "All things that are reprov'd, are made manifest by the light, &c." (Eph. v. 13.)

In addition to the above, the following texts are adduced, as having reference to the same divine gift, under the character of "the Word," or "the Word of God." There are some professing Christians, however, who suppose that these texts should be understood as referring to the Scriptures; the impropriety of this supposition, it is apprehended will be evident, if a portion of the context, which will now be quoted, be duly considered. It will be found to embrace attributes, which, it is conceived, are ascribable, not to the Scriptures, but to Christ, who is "the Word," by whom the world, and all things in it, were created. (Heb. xi. 3.) The Apostle Paul declares, that the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring down Christ from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." (Rom. x. 8.) The Apostle James exhorts, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." (Jas. i. 21.) The Apostle Peter addresses the believers as "being

* "Reprobates," that is, not approved.

born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." "All flesh is as grass," &c., but "the Word of the Lord endureth for ever." (1 Peter i. 23, 24, 25.) In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we have a very particular description of this divine Word. The apostle declares, that "the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts, and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do." (Heb. iv. 12, 13.) Here this eminent Apostle ascribes the divine attribute of omniscience to the Word of God. Now they who say the "Word of God," described in this text, is the Scriptures, must of course ascribe this attribute (omniscience) to them; but in doing this, they should consider whether they are not subjecting themselves to the serious imputation of *idolizing the Scriptures*.

The Apostle Paul teaches us, that the Holy Scriptures were given by divine inspiration; and are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;" and they "are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17.) They bear testimony to Christ, as the Saviour of the world; setting forth the doctrine which he preached, when personally on earth, and describing what he did and suffered for mankind. They also hold forth very clear declarations respecting his spiritual appearance in their souls, in order to effect their regeneration and sanctification. But in the various dispensations of "his grace and truth" unto mankind, the Lord Jesus Christ "the High Priest of our profession," (Heb. iii. 1) works immediately, or by outward means, as he pleases. Indeed,

one of the distinguishing excellencies of the Christian dispensation is, that it leads to a communion with the Father and the Son, which is not dependent on any external medium. Through Christ we have "access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. ii. 18.) While we highly estimate the benefit to be derived from the sacred record, we should not forget, that we shall abuse this precious gift, if we exalt it, so as to put it in the place of Him, who is thus described: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.—All things were made by Him.—In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John i. 1, 3, 4.) Let us then, in ascribing to the Bible all the honour which the inspired writers themselves attribute to it, be careful not to exalt it above, nor to place it on an equality with, Christ or the Holy Spirit, from whom its authority is derived.*

In publishing this concise view of the commencement and progress of vital religion in the soul, the writer wishes to observe, that probably it may fall into the hands of religiously disposed persons of different denominations; some of whom may be ready to say, 'this doctrine does not accord with that which we have been accustomed to hear from our ministers; it is a doctrine, which, in many material points, as far as our observation has extended, is seldom heard from the pulpit in the present day.' Should objec-

* Such however is the deference that is due to this authority, that the Scriptures are to be considered as the only fit outward test, by which controversies among Christians on religious subjects are to be decided; so that whatsoever doctrine is contrary to their testimony, may therefore justly be rejected as false; and whatsoever any persons, pretending to the Spirit, may do, which is contrary to the Scriptures, should be considered as the effect of delusion. See R. Barclay's Apology, Prop. 3.

tions of this kind be excited in the minds of any persons, who in sincerity of heart are seeking that knowledge which "is life eternal;" (John xvii. 3) the writer entreats them to consider, that this doctrine was promulgated by our Lord Jesus Christ himself; and that his Apostles preached substantially the same truths; of which assertion, abundant proof may be found, by reference to the various texts quoted in the preceding paragraphs.

While the reader is engaged in the investigation of this momentous subject, he is also earnestly entreated to recur to his own experience, in past seasons of serious reflection. Hast thou not witnessed, at least in some degree, the truth of the declarations of Scripture, to which, in the preceding pages, thy attention has been directed?—*Has not the light of Christ shone in thy heart?*—Has it not awakened thee from a state of carnal security, and placed thy transgressions in order before thee,—soliciting thee to break off from thy sins by repentance and amendment of life?—Thou mayst be well assured of this truth, that it is not the work of thy soul's enemy, thus *to detect*, and *to lay open* his own devices: he seeks to deceive, to cover up, and to darken his own ways and baits, that their real nature and tendency may not be discovered. It is the light of Christ Jesus our adorable Redeemer that detects, and makes known, the workings of the grand deceiver. If then thou art now convinced, by the concurrent testimony of the Light or Spirit of Christ, and of Holy Scripture, that the doctrine preached by men, (whom thou hast esteemed as ministers of the gospel) is not in full accordance with that which Jesus Christ, and his Apostles, preached; surely eternal happiness is involved in thy faithfully embracing the latter. And should this course of inward conviction and renovation of heart, prove very contrary to thy natural inclination, so as to be indeed a cross difficult to be endured; yet, remember who it is that said, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross,

and come after me, cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 27.) Be encouraged, then, *to bear this cross*, and faithfully to follow Christ, in the path of self-denial. It is one of the greatest privileges held out to thee, by the Christian dispensation, that *He is given to be thy "Leader," thy spiritual Guide*: (Isa. lv. 4:) and if, in humility of mind, thou obey the monitions of his holy light revealed in thy heart, *thou herein followest Christ*.

As this is an important point of Christian doctrine, the writer is inclined to repeat the assertion, that he, who truly believes in, and follows the light of Christ, is virtually a believer in, and follower of Christ; and therefore, a partaker of the benefits resulting from his sufferings and death.* On the contrary, he who practically disregards and rejects this Light, disregards and rejects Christ; and thus deprives himself of that salvation, which those who believe in and follow Christ, partake of. These positions are supported by the texts quoted in the beginning of this chapter, taken in connexion with John viii. 12, and 1 John i. 7. Corroborating testimony appears also, in the following gracious declaration of the Almighty concerning Christ, already quoted: "*I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles* ;† *that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of*

* This assertion is not invalidated by the fact, that some persons who have professed (although falsely) a belief in the Light or Spirit of Christ, have disregarded and rejected the Holy Scriptures. As the sacred Record was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and as this divine Teacher, in itself, is unchangeable, it evidently follows that its influence never can lead any one to condemn that which it has dictated for our instruction. Therefore they who disregard and reject the Holy Scriptures, do plainly show, whatever they may profess, that their minds, instead of being under the influence of the Light, or Spirit of Christ, are involved in gross darkness and delusion.

† The word "Gentiles," in the language of Scripture, appears to signify all mankind excepting the Jews.

the earth." (Isa. xlix. 6.) They who believe in, and follow this divine Light, are favoured with access to the fountain of wisdom and strength. Through faith they receive power to fulfil its requisitions; and the obedient are rewarded with peace and joy. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

May the attention of the sincere seekers after truth be turned, day by day, to this inward monitor, the true spiritual Guide. It will not lead you in the least degree to disregard the Holy Scriptures; on the contrary, it will enable you to understand them more truly in the sense in which they were written, than the best unassisted faculties of man can do; and to apply them most effectually to your individual instruction and comfort: moreover, the harmony which you will witness, as you advance in your religious progress, between the law of the Spirit written on the heart, and the precepts and doctrines contained in the Bible, as far as the latter apply to your individual states respectively, will not fail to afford you much satisfaction and encouragement. That you may then be kept from falling into any temptation, by which the enemy may strive to mar the Lord's work in your souls, may your secret aspirations, under the influence of the Spirit of Christ, frequently ascend unto your heavenly Father, with fervent desires, that his kingdom may come, and be set up in your hearts, and that his holy will may be done, in and by you, even in all things; and when the Light of Christ points out what he requires of you, as individuals, both in doing that which is right in his sight, and in avoiding that which is evil, may the language of each soul be,—"*Not my will, O Lord, but thine be done!*" By thus endeavouring, in all things, to follow your Redeemer, through that divine aid, which will assuredly be granted unto every one, who seeks it in sincerity of heart; his gracious declaration, already quoted, will be fulfilled in your ex-

perience;—"I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

The Apostle Paul made this observation respecting the Jews:—"When Moses is read," (who wrote of Christ, John i. 45,) "the veil is upon their heart; nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." (2 Cor. iii. 15, 16.) So also it may be said now, of very many professed Christians,—that when they read the New Testament, the veil is, in some measure, upon their heart: for although they receive the doctrine held forth in the Scriptures, concerning the outward, or personal appearance of Christ, his sufferings and death for mankind, which doctrine the Christian faith fully embraces; yet they are deficient in respect of that important article of the same faith, which the Apostle enforces in this emphatic language,—“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) He also declares that, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Rom. viii. 9.) We may, however, confidently entertain the same assurance, concerning the professed Christians now adverted to, as the Apostle expressed respecting the Jews; viz., that when their heart “shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.” When this change takes place, (*O that it may be speedily effected!*)—they will then be prepared to receive the Light, or Spirit of Christ, for their “Leader;” (Isa. lv. 4,) and by submitting to his heart-purifying baptism, and following him in the path of regeneration and sanctification, they will bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, through its quickening, life-giving influence. This fruit, the Apostle declares, is “Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, tem-

perance. (Gal. v. 22, 23.) Again, "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." (Eph. v. 9.) What greater blessing can the most enlightened philanthropist desire for the whole human race, than this,—that the fruit of the Spirit, as above described, may be universally brought forth? Moral evil would then be driven from the face of the earth; "The kingdoms of this world [would] become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; [who] shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. xi. 15.)

CHAPTER II.

THE WORSHIP WHICH, UNDER THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION, IS ORDAINED OF GOD.

IN the conversation which our Lord condescended to hold with the woman of Samaria, he declared, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 23, 24.) On other occasions he said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John xiv. 6.) "Without me ye can do nothing." (John xv. 5.) These declarations plainly indicate, that the worship of God, under the Christian dispensation, is of a spiritual character; and must be offered in truth;—that we cannot come unto the Father, and offer unto him this true worship, but by Jesus Christ, who is "*the way, the truth, and the life.*" Now, his assistance is communicated to us by the quickening influence of His Holy Spirit, without which the important duty of worship cannot be acceptably performed. This appears to have been the sentiment of the Apostle Paul; for he declares, that "No man can say (or acknowledge) that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," or Spirit. Hence it is apparent, that all worship, having a different origin, and which is of the kind designated by the Apostle "will-worship," (Col. ii. 23,) being merely the act of self—the mere product of the will and wisdom of man—whether or not it be adorned with

eloquence of speech, or accompanied with vocal or instrumental music, is not the true worship of God. Even if this worship be supported by human authority, and sanctioned by it as orthodox, still the declaration of Jesus Christ is applicable unto it. "In vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. xv. 9.)

It may be said of merely nominal Christians in the present day, that, although in many instances, supineness respecting religion is the prominent feature of their character; yet, in many other cases, they are zealous in supporting the creeds of the religious communities to which they are individually attached; but they refuse to submit to the convictions of the Spirit of Christ—they will not come to his baptism—they refuse to walk in the path of self-denial;—and the consequence is that their hearts are not cleansed—the chaff is not burnt up—they remain carnally minded. Now while they continue in this state of resistance against the Spirit of Christ, there is cause for them to fear, that the worship which they offer to Almighty God, is not more acceptable in his sight, than was that of the Pharisees formerly. The Pharisees rejected Christ in his outward, or personal appearance; the merely nominal Christians above described, reject Christ in his inward, or spiritual appearance in their hearts. Like the Pharisees, they think they "have eternal life" in the Scriptures; and like them also, they will not come to Christ, that they "might have life." (See John v. 39, 40.)

But it is much to be lamented, that the adversary of mankind so much prevails, not only in diverting the merely nominal Christian from even entering on the true spiritual course, but also in impeding the progress of many serious persons, who have *begun* to walk in it; and who, loving the Lord Jesus in a good degree of sincerity, have so far followed his holy guidance, as to be redeemed from many

evil customs and vanities of the world. Yet, not patiently and humbly submitting to the operation of that power, by which "old things are" made to "pass away," and "all things to become new, and all things" to be "of God" (2 Cor. v. 17, 18;) their growth in the divine life is obstructed; and their strong attachment to human prescriptions, relative to forms of worship, and ceremonial observances, prevents them from attaining that clearness of spiritual discernment, into which they would have been introduced, if, in childlike simplicity, they had been passive in the Lord's hand, like clay in the hand of the potter. In this state of defective submission to the divine will, they are not in a capacity duly to appreciate the benefits resulting from a practical faith *in the name* of the Son of God. Their views and dependence being outwardly directed, are limited to a merely literal explanation of this holy name; they do not therefore clearly perceive the necessity of seeking and waiting for divine influence, to effect the needful preparation of heart before him, previous to the offering of their prayers at the throne of grace. And if in their assemblies for divine worship they are not gathered together in the name of Christ, can it be expected that he will be in the midst of them? (See Matt. xviii. 20.)

The necessity of the influence of the Spirit of Christ, in this solemn engagement of worship, is fully acknowledged by the Apostle Paul; for, notwithstanding his extraordinary gifts, and large experience in the ministry of the Gospel, he declares, respecting himself and his fellow-believers, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered;" (Rom. viii. 26,) that is, as a late writer* observes, "with fervent internal aspirations,

* Priscilla H. Gurney.

the sensible effect of that powerful cause,—even the silent operation of the Spirit of truth ; showing unto man, from time to time, his real condition ; and teaching him immediately, both what to pray for, and how to pray aright.”

By Him, Jesus Christ, let us then worship and serve God “in newness of Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter;” (Rom. vii. 6,) believing *in his name*,—even in that name, which God hath exalted above every name, “that at” or in* “the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth ; and *that* every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. ii. 10, 11.) Were the true *bowing at the name of Jesus* understood, and witnessed in our hearts,—were we so humbled by his power, as to submit to his government, however contrary to our former views and practices, the performance of our religious, as well as of our moral duties, being brought under his holy influence and control, we should be Christians indeed ; we should be able *in truth* to address Jesus Christ as our Lord ;—his holy light being our Leader, and his holy will, made known to us thereby, being done in and by us in all things. *Thus* would the name of Jesus be “exalted above every” other “name, to the glory of God the Father.”

In the opening of this chapter, reference is made to those merely nominal Christians, who, rejecting the admonitions of the light of Christ, refuse to enter the path of self-denial, and are consequently disqualified, while they persist in their disobedience, for the performance of that worship which is in spirit and in truth. In pursuing this subject, it is designed to show the necessity, not only of entering “in at the strait gate,” but also of *continuing* “to walk in the narrow way,” bearing the cross daily,

* J. G. Bevan's Life of Paul, note, page 363.

and following Christ; that the Christian traveller may be preserved from taking up a rest in his own works, confiding in a form of godliness, without its life and power. May a sense of this danger deeply impress the minds of such religiously disposed persons, as have been addressed in several preceding paragraphs of this chapter. In order to place the subject before them in a clear point of view, their attention is solicited to the following observations, founded principally on this precept of our Redeemer—of Him, let us ever remember, whom our heavenly Father has commanded us to hear: (Matt. xvii. 5:) “If any man will come after me,”—in other words, if any man will be a Christian indeed,—“let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” (Luke ix. 23.) The effects which result from faithfully persevering in this course, which, we must acknowledge, our Saviour himself has pointed out to us, are thus briefly described by the Apostle Paul: “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Gal. ii. 20.) This eminent minister of Christ not only witnessed the mortification of the flesh in his own person; but also enforced it on those among whom he laboured, in the following emphatic language: “This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; for the flesh lusteth,” or striveth “against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other.” (Gal. v. 16, 17.) And in order to convince us, that walking in the Spirit and bearing the daily cross, are absolutely necessary to our becoming true Christians, he declares, “They that are Christ’s, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.” (Gal. v. 24.)

This observation of the Apostle, respecting the conflict which takes place between the Spirit and the flesh, may be considered applicable to all mankind, however diversified as to religious profession. Now whichever of these, (the Spirit or the flesh) we join with and obey, by this are we influenced and governed,—“His servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.” (Rom. vi. 16.) The Spirit prompts us to deny self, to crucify the flesh by taking up our cross daily, and to follow Christ; its purifying effects in our hearts being evinced, by our living “soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” And if this divine instructor in its further manifestations in our hearts be obeyed, through the ability which it imparts, it will enable us “to worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” But the tempter, through the medium of the flesh, strives in various ways to obstruct and prevent these most desirable results. When his efforts are ineffectual to draw awakened minds back again into their former habits of gross irreligion and sin, he then employs a more insidious snare, by assuming a religious character, and making a specious show of piety and devotion; but still opposing the Holy Spirit, by endeavouring, through deceptive insinuations, to prevent its salutary admonitions from being listened to and obeyed. In particular, he strives to excite, and to foster in the minds of many professed Christians, an aversion to the duty of “Watching;” (Eph. vi. 18; Mark xiii. 37;—xiv. 38; Col. iv. 2;) under which, that of patient waiting for the Lord, in the exercise of faith and love, appears to be included; (see Hosea, xii. 6; Isai. xl. 31; Psalm xl. i;) a duty mercifully designed as the means, by which, in stillness* (weak and feeble and liable to be misled as we

* “Be still, and know that I am God.” (Psalm xli. 10.)

all are of ourselves,) the sincere in heart may hear the voice of the "good Shepherd," and may receive from him instruction to perceive, and strength to avoid temptation, and ability also to offer up their prayers in His holy name, to their heavenly Father. But the enemy, through the carnal mind, suggests doubts, whether this duty of watching be really obligatory; and it may be apprehended, that in order effectually to divert the professors of religion from the practice of it, he prompts them to place their dependence on *their own wisdom* and activity, rather than to submit to so self-denying an exercise of mind. In all cases, in which these insinuations are embraced and followed, the secret monitions of the spirit of Christ become gradually disregarded; darkness then ensues; and of course, the great work of purification of heart is obstructed. They seek, and soon find, a way to walk in, that is more agreeable to the natural will and the pride of the human heart, than that in which the denial of self, and the patient bearing of the daily cross are required. Their faith standing not in the power of God, but in the wisdom of men; (1 Cor. ii. 5;) they are frequently running after this or the other eloquent minister, not regarding the declaration of Christ—"the kingdom of God is within you;" nor seeking (the manifestation of) this kingdom and the righteousness of God according to his command: (Matt. vi. 33:)—as they go on in this course, they become, in very many instances, strongly attached to forms and ceremonies, set up and enjoined by human wisdom and authority; and thus they are led into the practice of will-worship.

Alas! how greatly is the brightness of genuine Christianity obscured in the present day, among very many professors of it; through their not duly watching against and avoiding the influence and efforts of the carnal mind,

in every form, under which it opposes, and strives against the Spirit of Christ. They will probably admit that watchfulness is requisite, as a preservative from the violation of the precepts of morality, in their general conduct and conversation; but they appear not to be sufficiently aware, that it is especially necessary in regard to the worship which they offer to Almighty God: for in this solemn engagement, as far as they are led by the activity of self or the flesh, so far are their minds disqualified for the reception of the life-giving influence of the Spirit of Christ, through which alone the acceptable worship, which is in spirit and in truth, can be offered. So that however ardent their zeal may be in devotional exercises, and however delightful the animation it excites, yet, if the influence by which they are actuated in their worship, be not that of the Spirit of Christ, the conclusion seems inevitable, that it proceeds from self or the carnal mind.

How needful then is it, for professed Christians of every denomination, under a conviction of the great danger in which a mistake in this important concern would involve them, to lay open their hearts, in all humility and sincerity, to the discriminating ray of the light of Christ,—to that standard, to which the Apostle directs our attention;—"All things that are reproved, are made manifest by the light, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light;" (Eph. v. 13;) that, under its direction, they may be enabled to form a true judgment, as to the influence which hath obtained the government in their minds. The sad consequences of continuing to act under the influence of that which opposes the Spirit of Christ, may be inferred from these words of the same Apostle: "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace; because the carnal mind is enmity against

God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; so then they that are in the flesh" (they in whom the carnal mind predominates) "cannot please God;" (Rom. viii. 6, 7, 8;) to which it may be added, that however highly they may characterize their religious attainments, yet while they remain in this state, they are incapable of participating in that fellowship, which is "with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John i. 3.)

In reverting to the description which the Apostle gives of his own experience, already quoted, let us take into view what he says in another place, on the same important subject: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death; therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5.) By thus conforming to the doctrine of his Lord, in bearing the daily cross, and by submitting to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle was enabled to say, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

May all professed Christians be stimulated and encouraged to press forward to the attainment of this state,* ac-

* Let it not be supposed that the high privileges which the Christian dispensation holds out to mankind, do not comprise the attainment of this state. Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed to the Father, not only on behalf of his immediate followers, but for them also which should believe on him through their word,—*"That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us. I in them, and thou in me, &c.*—concluding his supplication (which should be read with reve-

ording to the measure of divine light or grace severally dispensed to them. May they be so humbled by the power of God, as to become willing to "deny self," "the flesh," or "the carnal mind;" in other words, to "put off *the old man* with his deeds;" (Col. iii. 9;) not only *his* grossly corrupt and sinful practices, but also *his* acts of devotion, *his* praying and singing, and (in respect to ministry) *his* preaching too. Then will they be enabled, by following Christ in the regeneration, (Matt. xix. 28,) to "put on the new man; which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. iv. 24.) They will become true worshippers, like the believers formerly, *worshipping God in the Spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh.* (Phil. iii. 3.)

The Scriptures declare, that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; (Rom. viii. 14;) and that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (1 Cor. xii. 7.) How desirable, how indispensable then is it, that all, and especially those who call themselves ministers of Christ, should follow the puttings forth and leadings of his Spirit in their own minds. The teaching of the Spirit of Christ is always in accordance with his doctrines and precepts, which are presented to us in the Scriptures; so that those who are in office, as ministers of Christ, if they be truly such, and be indeed led by his Spirit, will evince, not only in their conduct and conversation, but also *in their ministry*, a faithful adherence to that portion of his doctrine already adverted to, enjoining the denial of self, the taking up the daily cross, and the following of him.

rence and awe) in these words: "I have declared unto them *thy name*, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and *I in them.*" (John xvii. 20, 21, 23, 26.)

But if any who undertake the office of a Christian minister, evince in their general deportment, a disposition to evade the denial of self, to shrink from bearing the cross, and from putting "off the old man with his deeds;" (Col. iii. 9;)—if, instead of following the Spirit of Christ, in their ministry, they follow the suggestions of their own "fleshly wisdom," (2 Cor. i. 12,) "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," (Matt. xv. 9,) his own declaration seems to authorize the conclusion, that their worship is "in vain." And when any of those, who, declining the use of the modes and forms of worship prescribed by human authority, profess to depend on the direction of the Spirit of Truth, do not wait in humility of mind for its life-giving influence, but in their self-will, under the impulse of creaturely zeal, undertake to preach or to pray in their public assemblies, these performances, like the offering of strange fire under the Mosaic dispensation, (Levit. x. 1,) may be considered to be in an especial manner offensive in the divine sight. In all these cases, unless they submit to that divine word, which is said to be "like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces," (Jer. xxiii. 29,) and unless by its effectual operation they are brought to the experience of true humiliation and contrition, and through repentance witness purification of heart from pride and exaltation of self, they are in danger of becoming like unto some formerly, of whom we read,—that they "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men;" neither going in themselves, nor suffering "them that are entering to go in." (Matt. xxiii. 13.) And if they persist in this course, disregarding the convictions of the Spirit of Christ, which, from the time when they began to reject its admonitions in their own consciences, it may be presumed, has not failed at seasons still to reprove them, they will become more and more "laden with iniquity;" and by thus continuing in the transgression of the law written on

the table of the heart, there will be much ground for them to fear, however successful they may esteem their ministerial labours, that ultimately their portion will be with those, concerning whom our Holy Redeemer has declared, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied (or preached) in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. vii. 22, 23.)

CHAPTER III.

ON BAPTISM.—CONTINUATION OF THE SUBJECT OF DIVINE WORSHIP, IN CONNEXION WITH OBSER- VATIONS ON THE PARTAKING OF THE FLESH AND BLOOD OF CHRIST.

THE qualifications requisite for admission into the church of Christ, do not comprise the observance of any of the types, ceremonies, and carnal ordinances, of the Mosaic dispensation, or of that of John the Baptist; which were fulfilled, and abrogated by the Son of God, in his personal appearance and death on the cross. But the Apostle Paul plainly declares, that, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" (Rom. viii. 9;) that is, if any man have not accepted the Spirit of Christ for his teacher, his baptizer, and his sanctifier, but on the contrary, in respect of these offices, have disregarded and rejected him, this man is not Christ's. Whatever may be his profession or performances, as to religion, whether he be a member of the 'Established Church,' or a dissenter from it, he is not a member of the spiritual body or church, of which Christ is the Head. For according to the doctrine of the same Apostle, the baptism, by which believers are introduced into this church, is the baptism of the Spirit; (1 Cor. xii. 13;) consequently it is not that of water, applied either by sprinkling or immersion. The baptism of the Spirit is an inward work; and it should never be forgotten, that it is not the body, but the soul of man, that is the subject of it.

John the Baptist makes a very clear distinction between

his baptism with water, and the baptism of Christ: "I indeed (said he) baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:" (Matt. iii. 11.) and a similar and equally clear description of the two baptisms is given by our Lord himself. (Acts i. 5.) This baptism with the Holy Ghost, is that which has been already adverted to in the first chapter of this pamphlet. It is the work of the Spirit of Christ operating in the soul of man, principally immediately, but sometimes also instrumentally by the ministry of the Gospel. This baptizing ministry appears to have been instituted by Jesus Christ himself; we do not find that he gave any commission to his disciples to baptize with water, or that he so baptized any one himself. We read that after his resurrection, he declared to them, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," adding "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name (the divine power and life) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.) Of this baptizing ministry, we have an instance in the account which the Apostle Peter gives of his visit to the family of Cornelius: "As I began to speak," said he, "the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning: then remembered I the word of the Lord; John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." To this the Apostle added, "God gave them the like gift as he did unto us." (Acts xi. 15, 16, 17.)

Thus the gift of the Holy Spirit appears to have accompanied the preaching of Peter, and was communicated *independently of water-baptism*; although this Apostle was not then fully weaned from an attachment to this typical ordinance; for it appears that in this case of early Gentile conversion, he directed it to be administered to

them, who had previously received the Holy Spirit; (Acts x. 47, 48,) although under a doubt, which the enquiry, "Can any man forbid water," &c. seems to imply. In process of time, however, this eminent Apostle's views on the subject of baptism, appear to have been enlarged; for we find, that in his general epistle, describing the baptism by which believers are now saved, he declares, it is "not the putting away the filth of the flesh," (which is the proper effect of baptism, or washing, in water,) "but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter iii. 21.) Now this is a description of the effect of Christ's baptism with the Holy Spirit, and with fire; by which a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, through faith in that divine power, by which Christ rose from the dead, are witnessed; and thus the answer or testimony of a good conscience is produced. The Apostle Paul's language on this subject is also very instructive: having adverted to the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to the saints, which (saith he) "is Christ in you, the hope of glory; whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus;" he then proceeds, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him;"—"and ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power;"—"buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (Col. i. 26, 27, 28; Col. ii. 6, 10, 12.) "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans vi. 4.) This is that one baptism of which the Apostle speaks, (Eph. iv. 5: "There is one body and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism;"

and describing the agent in this important work, (whether commenced through the medium of instrumental ministry, or not,) he declares, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," or Church of Christ; "and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 13.)

The terms "water" and "fire" are used in the New Testament, in reference to the baptism of Christ, and to the new birth, which is the effect of this baptism. It is said of Christ, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Matt. iii. 11.) Again we read, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 5.) But these terms, in the texts quoted, are not to be understood literally, but figuratively. As the property of water is to cleanse, and that of fire to refine, so the baptism of Christ cleanses and refines the soul which submits to it, from the stains and dross of sin.

In the apostolic age, although the baptism of Christ, when administered instrumentally, by the preaching of the Gospel, was in many instances accompanied by miraculous gifts; yet we have no ground to conclude now, in the absence of such gifts, that a measure of the same baptizing influence of the Spirit does not still accompany the ministry of those, whom he calls, qualifies, and employs in his service; and who act therein, only under his ministration and guidance, in an humble dependence on his wisdom, life and power. Through the gracious continuance of divine mercy and love, this influence is yet witnessed, in a greater or less degree, when the word, thus preached, is "mixed with faith" in them that hear it. (Heb. iv. 2.)

Some of the advocates of water baptism lay much stress on those instances which are recorded in the New Testament, in which some of the Apostles appear to have used, or to have directed the use of, this typical ordinance. But when it is considered that some of the Apostles for awhile after the crucifixion and ascension of our Holy Redeemer,

were in the practice not only of water baptism, but also of some other typical ordinances, viz. circumcision, &c. ; there appears no valid reason why their practice with respect to water baptism, should be considered more obligatory on the Christian church at the present day, than their practice with respect to circumcision, and some other Mosiac rites. 'On a view of the whole matter, there appears sufficient ground for the conclusion, that it was permitted by divine wisdom, that the typical ordinances of the preceding dispensations, (of Moses and of John,) although virtually abrogated by the death of Christ on the cross, should not in the infantile state of the Church be laid aside suddenly, but gradually, as the minds of the Christian converts became capable of more clearly comprehending the spiritual character of the Christian dispensation. It is therefore earnestly recommended to all those, whose minds are so far enlightened, as to see clearly that something more than the mere name or outward profession of Christianity is absolutely necessary, that in seeking to become in reality members of the church of Christ, and sheep of his fold, they do not endeavour to climb up through the ways which human wisdom may uphold, by a recurrence to the use of any of the types or ordinances of former dispensations, which were fulfilled and abrogated by the coming and death of Christ, as the Scripture declares: (Heb. ix. 8—11; Col. ii. 14, 16, 17:) for Christ is the door of the true sheep-fold, or church; (John x. 9;) and they who become members of it, must enter in by faith in him, and by submission to the baptism of his Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. xii. 13.)

They who thus become members of the true church of Christ, are permitted to witness its blessed privileges. They partake of that divine food, which he describes as his flesh and blood; and this food is so necessary for their preservation and growth in true religion, that he declared, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye

have no life in you." (John vi. 53.) Some who heard him speak these words, thought then, as many professed Christians appear to think in the present day, that this declaration should be understood as relating to the flesh and blood of his outward or material body. Our Lord, however, graciously condescended to correct this mistake:—may every one, who has adopted this, or any other outward signification of the words of Christ now under notice, very seriously reflect upon and accept, the explanation which *He* gave, on this highly important subject. After it had been queried, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" this was his reply: "*It is the Spirit that quickeneth.*" Surely then, if it be the Spirit that quickeneth, or giveth life, it should be concluded, that it was the partaking of the quickening, life-giving influences of his Holy Spirit, diffused in the soul,—He dwelling in us and we in him, (v. 56,) which he designed to represent under the terms, eating his flesh and drinking his blood, without which we have no life in us. And it seems, as if it were in order to place this important point beyond the risk of mistake or doubt, that after he had said, "*It is the Spirit that quickeneth,*" he immediately added, "*the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life.*" (John vi. 63.) The doctrine of the Apostle Paul, on this very important subject, is in perfect unison with that of his divine Master. In his Epistle to the Corinthians, he declares that "the Spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) It also appears, from his first Epistle to the same church, that long before the incarnation of Christ, some of the Israelites partook of that spiritual meat and drink, which are derived from him; for the Apostle declares, "they did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ." (1 Cor. x. 3, 4.)

If the followers of Jesus Christ could have been permitted

to eat the flesh of his material body, it is evident, from his own words, that it would have profited them nothing. It was the life-giving influence of his Holy Spirit, by which alone those who believed on him in that day, were made alive, and preserved "alive unto God." (Rom. vi. 11.) And in the present day, the same divine influence produces similar effects, in the souls of all those, who, believing in the light, life, and power of Christ, receive him for their Teacher, Saviour, Priest, and King; believing also, if they have access to the Holy Scriptures, all that those sacred records declare, respecting the sufferings and death of Christ, and the benefits resulting therefrom to mankind. These partake of the true supper of the Lord; as it is written, "Behold, I stand at the door" (*of the heart*) "and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. iii. 20.) This divine food is essentially the same as that which our Holy Redeemer described under other figurative terms; viz. as the bread which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world; (John vi. 33;) as "living water," which, in them who drink of it, should be as a "well of water, springing up into everlasting life." (John iv. 10, 14.)

Amidst the manifold mercies which they partake of, who, through divine grace, witness an advancement in the work of regeneration, this communication of spiritual food to their souls, should ever be gratefully acknowledged. Like the sap, that enables the branches which abide in the vine, to bring forth fruit, so the quickening, life-giving influence of the Spirit of Christ, who is the "true vine," (John xv. 1,) enables those who, as branches, abide in Him, to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, which are, "in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." (Eph. v. 9.) For under His holy influence, they are incited and strengthened from day to day to maintain, even in their temporal concerns, a strict adherence to justice, truth, and equity, doing unto others,

as they would that others should do unto them. Their words and actions being leavened by Christian purity, sincerity, humility, and love, they exemplify, as their growth in the divine life progresses, not only in their own families, but amongst all with whom they associate, the powerful efficacy of that *holy name*, in which they have believed, and into which they have been baptized.

If we seriously recur to those solemn declarations of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;" "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him; (John vi. 53, 56;) and if we keep in view the clear explanation which he condescended to give of these words, the conclusion must surely be admitted, on the highest authority, that whatever may be our religious profession,—however largely our minds may be furnished with the literal knowledge of the doctrines and precepts of the Holy Scriptures, or our memories charged with the recorded experience of good men of ancient and modern times,—and however highly we may think of ourselves, or be esteemed by others, on this or on any other account; yet, *if we do not partake of the quickening influences of the Spirit of Christ, we have no life in us;—we dwell not in Him, nor He in us;—*and consequently we are more or less in a state of spiritual darkness and death. A conviction of the vast importance of this subject, induces the writer, under, he trusts, some degree of the constraining love of Christ, to press it upon the close attention of those, with whom he is connected in religious profession,* as well as upon Christians of every other denomination.

Having endeavoured, in the preceding pages, to point out the means whereby the soul, through the obedience of faith,

* The Society of Friends.—The writer wishes to state, that the Society is not responsible for any thing contained in these pages.

may attain to a capacity of partaking of this divine food, and to show the necessity and benefits thereof, it may be proper in the next place to make some further observations, with respect to its communication and effects.

The great Head of the church dispenses this heavenly sustenance to the living members of his body, in their religious assemblies, sometimes by the instrumental ministry of the gospel, at other times by the immediate effusion of his Holy Spirit upon their minds, when, it may be, the assembly is in a state of solemn silence, and reverent waiting before Him. They are also permitted to enjoy this privilege from time to time, in seasons of private retirement; and even day by day, whilst engaged in their lawful occupations, if, feeling the want of the enlivening influence of the Spirit of Christ, they humbly seek it. It is pre-eminently for this divine nourishment—for this bread “that cometh down from heaven,” that our blessed Saviour teaches us to pray to our heavenly Father,—“*Give us this day our daily bread.*” When favoured in their public assemblies to witness the gracious promises fulfilled, that, “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength,” (Isa. xl. 31,) and that where even two or three are gathered together in His name, there, *He, who is “a quickening Spirit,”* (1 Cor. xv. 45,) *even the Lord Jesus Christ, is in the midst of them;* (Matt. xviii. 20;) they can thankfully acknowledge, that, although the baptizing ministry of the gospel is a great blessing to the church of Christ, and should be received with feelings of gratitude to the Source of all good; yet it is a higher privilege to be fed immediately by *Himself*, the holy Head of the church and Bishop of souls, than through the instrumentality of their fellow-members.

The solemn declaration of our Holy Redeemer to the woman of Samaria on the subject of worship, should indeed make a deep and awful impression upon the minds of all

who profess to prostrate themselves before the Most High ! “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in truth.” And again he said ; “No man cometh unto the Father but by me ;”—and “without me ye can do nothing.” How needful then must it be, in order to perform this worship, that the mind be brought into a state of entire humiliation,—bowed down under a true sense of its great weakness,—of its many wants, and utter unworthiness,—accompanied with a conviction of the perfect purity of that Almighty Being, whose sacred presence is unapproachable, except through our Holy Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps it may be said, that there is no other engagement in which the religiously exercised mind is so fully penetrated by these feelings, as in that of silent waiting upon God in assemblies for public worship.

But although Christ is always in some measure present with those, who, through the baptism of his Holy Spirit, are members of his church ; yet, according to the experience of many who are of this description, he is frequently pleased to withhold from them, for a season, in their religious assemblies, as well as at other times, that increased communication of his power and life, which is needful to qualify them for the performance of the solemn act of divine worship. Yea, for a wise and gracious purpose, he oftentimes permits them to feel how weak they are of themselves,—how utterly insufficient by their own strength, to resist the efforts of their soul’s adversary ; who, by exciting the natural propensity to be occupied with terrestrial objects, or by presenting to the imagination creaturely ideas relative to worship or doctrine, often endeavours to draw off their minds from that denial of self—that subjugation of their own will and wisdom—which are requisite in order to wait patiently upon God in the exercise of faith and love. But although He, the good “Shepherd and Bishop of souls,” (1 Pet. ii. 25,) may permit those humble believers in him to

be thus tried and proved, yet he does not forsake them:— in his own time, (for which with fervent desire they reverently wait,) the enlivening, purifying influence of his Holy Spirit imparts fresh vigour to their souls: thus strengthened, they surmount those impediments, of what kind soever, which had obstructed their access “unto the throne of grace;” (Heb. iv. 16;) and they are enabled to “draw near in full assurance of faith.” (Heb. x. 22.) The worship thus offered in religious assemblies, whether it be accompanied with vocal ministry, prayer, or praise, in obedience to the will of the great Head of the church, immediately communicated to such of its members as he may see meet to employ in his service,—or whether in obedience to the same holy will, it wholly consists in silent* aspirations, arising from quickened souls, in a state of reverent prostration before the throne of grace,—in either case, this worship does not fail to meet the divine acceptance.

Although many individuals, in whom the work of regeneration has been begun, and who are in the practice of waiting upon God in assemblies for public worship, may not always receive such a supply of spiritual food, as the apprehension of their own need leads them to expect; yet may these not be discouraged: may they duly consider, that the Lord knows better than they do, what is best for

* It must not be supposed, that all, who are in the practice of sitting in silence, in assemblies for public worship, are benefited in the manner above described. It is only the awakened mind,—the mind in which the work of regeneration is in some degree begun, that is capable of truly waiting upon God in silence, under an exercise of faith and love towards him. Yet there is ground to believe, that in numerous instances, persons who have previously evinced little or no concern about their soul's salvation, being induced, some of them probably by mere curiosity, to enter a silent religious assembly, have been awakened, and their minds greatly contrited by the divine power; although not a word has been spoken in the assembly. And this visitation of the love of the Redeemer, has proved the commencement of the effectual working of his grace in their souls.

them. He knows what will conduce to the progress of that great work, which he has begun in their souls. For a wise and benign purpose, he introduces his children into a state of poverty of spirit; the tendency of this discipline being to increase their faith, and to establish them more firmly on Himself, the "sure foundation,"—"the Rock of Ages." Therefore, ye who hunger and thirst for the bread and water of life, be not dismayed on account of the apparent smallness of the portion sometimes, yea frequently, dispensed unto you. Should it be no more, figuratively speaking, than a crumb of this bread, or a drop of "living water," yet, if received with thankfulness, it will be found sufficient for the present need,—sufficient to strengthen you still to trust in the Lord,—still to wait upon him in faith, and with a lively hope in his goodness and mercy; and whenever these effects are witnessed, they should be considered as an evidence, that, through the gracious regard of your heavenly Father, a portion of divine aid and sustenance has been dispensed unto you. The revival of this faith and hope, when felt, after much mental labour and conflict, whether in religious assemblies, or in private retirement, how precious is it to the tribulated soul! The Lord's holy name be praised for all his mercies partaken of by those, who are engaged, although frequently under a feeling of many discouragements and infirmities, to seek for ability to worship him in Spirit and in truth!

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

IN reviewing the subjects adverted to in these pages, the writer is inclined to say a little more on some of them, especially on that very important one, the benefits resulting to mankind from the sufferings and death of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ on the cross: this is followed by some additional remarks respecting worship and ministry, with an exhortation to professed Christians.

The Scriptures declare, that the "Word which was in the beginning with God, and was God, was made (or took) flesh." (John i. 1—14.) "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil." (Heb. ii. 14.) "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.) He suffered death on the cross, and was buried. On the third day he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where, glorified with the Father, he is our Mediator and Intercessor with him.

In proceeding to describe more particularly the benefits which result to mankind from the death of Christ, the sentiments of the writer on this subject being well expressed in R. Barclay's "Apology for the true Christian Divinity," he inserts the following selection from that work.

"We consider our redemption in a twofold respect or state; both which, in their own nature are perfect; though in their application to us, the one is not, nor can be, without respect to the other.

"The first is, the redemption performed and accomplished *by Christ for us, in his crucified body, without us*: the other is the redemption wrought *by Christ in us*; which no less properly is called and accounted a redemption than the former. The first, then, is that whereby a man, as he stands in the fall, is put into a capacity of salvation; and hath conveyed unto him a measure of that power, virtue, spirit, life, and grace, that was in Christ Jesus; which, as the free gift of God, is able to counter-balance, overcome, and root out the evil seed, wherewith we are naturally, as in the fall, leavened.—The second is that, whereby we witness and know this pure and perfect redemption in ourselves, purifying, cleansing, and redeeming us from the power of corruption; and bringing us into unity, favour, and friendship with God.

"By the first of these two, we that were lost in Adam, plunged into the bitter and corrupt seed, unable of ourselves to do any good thing, but naturally joined and united to evil; forward and propense to all iniquity, servants and slaves to the power and spirit of darkness, are, notwithstanding all this, so far reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, while enemies, that we are put into a capacity of salvation, having the glad tidings of the gospel of peace offered unto us; and God is reconciled unto us in Christ, calls and invites us to himself. In which respect we understand these Scriptures: 'He slew the enmity in himself. He loved us first.—He who did no sin, his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree. And he died for our sins, the just for the unjust.' (Eph. ii. 15; 1 John iv. 10; 1 Peter ii. 22, 24, and iii. 18.)

“By the second, we witness this capacity brought into act; whereby receiving, and not resisting, the purchase of his death, to wit, the light, Spirit, and grace of Christ revealed in us, we witness and possess a real, true and inward redemption from the power and prevalency of sin; and so come to be truly and really redeemed, justified, and made righteous, and to a sensible union and friendship with God. Thus, ‘he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity;’ and thus, ‘we know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death.’ (Tit. ii. 14; Phil. iii. 10.) This last follows the first in order, and is a consequence of it, proceeding from it as an effect from its cause; for as none could have enjoyed the last without the first had been (such being the will of God,) so also can none now partake of the first, but as he witnesseth the last. Wherefore as to us, they are both causes of our justification; the first the procuring efficient, the other the formal cause.” Apology, prop. 7, sec. 3.

As it is evident from Scripture testimony, that it is absolutely requisite to our complete redemption, that we should individually believe in the divine light or Spirit of Christ, and by submission to his baptism, witness the work of regeneration in our souls, how desirable is it, that among all professed Christians, (as hath been already hinted,) no doctrines should be embraced, nor any ordinance or institution relative to ministry and worship set up, and practised, the tendency of which is, to divert their attention from this internal teacher, or in any degree to obstruct or restrain its influence and operation in the soul. An attentive perusal of the New Testament, will show, that one of the principal objects of the ministry of Jesus Christ, and also of his Apostles, was, to turn the attention of the people to this divine gift, as their teacher and guide, in the way to everlasting happiness. And surely this should be a

principal object, in the view of every professed minister of Christ *in the present day*; for the Christian religion is, in itself, the same now as it was in the apostolic age; yet, alas! great is the degeneracy from its original purity, among many of its professors, not only in regard to conduct and conversation, but also respecting doctrine and worship.

True believers in Christ, after their conversion, and the remission of their past sins through his blood, are still liable in their intercourse with the world, when the daily watching unto prayer is not fully maintained, to contract contamination from its spirit, and also from the flesh and the devil; which contamination when received, however minute it may be, cannot escape the detection of Him who seeth all things. In the degree in which this has prevailed, it tends to obstruct the access of the soul unto God, who is a Being of infinite purity and holiness. Now the great Head of the church, the High-priest and Bishop of souls, beholds the state of every individual in religious assemblies, and does not fail, when he sees meet, to dispense unto every one according to his need, who in the exercise of faith and love comes to him. He breaks the bread of life unto the pure in heart, and in his abundant mercy he gives repentance and contrition of soul unto those, who, through unwatchfulness have contracted any degree of defilement, "sprinkling their hearts from an evil conscience." (Heb. x. 22;) thus the gracious declaration of our Lord is verified, "Where two or three are gathered together in ^{my} ~~thy~~ name, (and consequently when a larger number is so gathered,) there am I in the midst of them;" (Matt. xviii. 20;) for these words of our holy Redeemer are not unmeaning sounds: they are definite and most certain truths. What a blessed privilege then is it, that a religious assembly *may* witness the life-giving presence of Christ revealed in and among them! But it should ever be borne in mind, that this high privilege is held out to those, and to those

only, who are gathered in his name; which, as already observed, signifies or has reference to his divine attributes, viz. his power, life, light, &c. That we may participate in this high privilege, the command of our Holy Redeemer to his disciples, "*What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch;*" and again, "*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation;*" (Mark xiii. 37; Matt. xxvi. 41,) should never be forgotten: it is indeed a duty very needful to be observed in the course of our daily conduct and conversation among men; but on no occasion is the practice of it more necessary, than in assemblies for public worship. For there is ground to believe, that the enemy of all good, strives, by every means in his power, to prevent the worshipping of Almighty God in spirit and in truth; and the human mind by its own strength is entirely incompetent to withstand his efforts. As, therefore, the declaration of Jesus Christ on this important subject, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him," (John iv. 23,) affords sufficient ground for the conclusion, that it is consistent with the will of our heavenly Father that this pure spiritual worship should everywhere prevail,—how indispensable to the being preserved from opposition to the divine will, in this particular, when assembled for the purpose of divine worship, is a uniform, implicit adherence to the injunction of our Lord,—even that "all," of every denomination in his militant church, should "*watch;*" that so, under the influence of his Holy Spirit, the supplications of their souls may ascend unto him, that they may not enter into any of the temptations of the enemy, including the temptation to preach, or vocally to pray or sing, before the quickening influence of the Spirit of Christ is felt distinctly to lead unto any one of these acts.

In the duty of watching, that of waiting upon God may

be considered to be included; and if this duty be patiently persevered in, there is a gracious assurance that the result will be a renewal of strength. (Isa. xl. 31.) Thus invigorated, true believers, through the loving kindness and strength of the Lord, will surmount the temptations of their souls' adversary; and will be enabled to worship the Father of spirits, in spirit and in truth—in solemn reverential silence;—followed, as often as the great Head of the church shall be pleased to direct, by vocal ministry, prayer, and praise. And this direction, communicated by the immediate influence of his Holy Spirit, when, and as he seeth meet to give it, in religious assemblies, will be clearly understood by those individuals, (if duly watchful and attentive,) whom he may be pleased to entrust with a gift of the ministry; and he will also furnish them with the needful supplies of that “wisdom, which is from above,” for the edification of his church. Then their dependence being placed *on this wisdom, and not on their own*, the apostolic direction will be thoroughly complied with; “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet. iv. 11.)

In divine worship, agreeably with various texts of Holy Scripture bearing on this subject, the life-giving influence of the Spirit of Christ should be regarded as the only true spring to action. The will and wisdom of man should not be suffered to predominate, or take the lead, but should be kept in entire subserviency. The general tenor of those declarations and promises which the Scriptures hold forth, relative to Christ and his Holy Spirit, describes him as given to mankind for *their Lord—their Leader—their Guide—their Shepherd—their High Priest, &c.* (John xiii. 13; Isai. lv. 4; John x. 14, and xvi. 13; Heb. ii. 17.) Now these characters convey the idea of *precedence*—

of *direction*—of *going before*—but, not of following. Accordingly we find that when our Lord described himself as “the good Shepherd,” he said, “When he *putteth forth* his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice.” (John x. 4.) “The good Shepherd” then “*putteth forth his own sheep*” *in all their religious services*, in public assemblies, and on other occasions. If therefore it be admitted, that the worship which is in spirit and in truth, is performed only under the quickening influence, and guidance of the Spirit of Christ—it behoves the professors of Christianity in general, very seriously to consider, whether they are performing this worship, when in their public assemblies they begin their religious services according to a previously prescribed form,—and when their ministers depend on their own wisdom, for a supply of matter for their sermons and prayers. If, on the contrary, their worship commences in the manner, and is performed under the circumstances now described,—or, in respect to those professed Christians who do not use any prescribed forms of worship, *if any of their ministers* be not careful reverently to wait for that “ability which God giveth,” (1 Peter iv. 11,) and if without this essential qualification they presume to preach or to pray in their assemblies; it should be a subject of grave consideration, whether in all these cases they are not proceeding without the only sure Guide and Leader, and substituting another leader, human wisdom, in its stead? For, indeed we have no ground from the testimony of Holy Scripture to expect, that the Spirit of Christ *will follow us with its life-giving influence*, when in our religious assemblies we put ourselves under the direction of our own will and wisdom, by beginning to preach, or to pray, or to sing, before the quickening influence of the Spirit of Christ is felt to put forth and lead in the performance of any of these acts.

Far be it, however, from the writer, to assign any limits to the love and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. He fully believes that in very many instances, where uprightness and sincerity of heart are found, our Holy Redeemer graciously condescends to render religious services, which are in some degree of the character now described, effectual to the awakening of the unconverted, to the convincing them of the danger of living in forgetfulness of God, and to the exciting in their hearts a lively feeling of their want of a Saviour. How greatly is it to be desired, that this gracious condescension of infinite goodness, may not be held up as an argument to obstruct their reception of, and obedience to, such further manifestations of divine light, as the great Head of the church may be pleased to dispense; in order to enable them more clearly to discriminate between that worship which is in spirit and in truth, and those performances to which the appellation of will-worship is in any degree applicable.

When it is considered that the well-being in this life, and the eternal happiness hereafter, of every individual, depends on his becoming not merely a nominal, but a real Christian; the subject appears evidently one of the greatest importance: for, as said our blessed Saviour, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul." Let then every professed Christian be stimulated, not to place his dependence on his being a member of any religious community, or on his being in the practice of uniting in any external form of worship, or ceremonial observance; but let him, with an anxiety in some degree adequate to the importance of the subject, seek an experimental knowledge of the power of God inwardly revealed; that by submission to its humbling operation, "every mountain and hill (of self-exaltation,) may be brought low;" (Luke iii. 5;) that so every obstacle to his coming unto Christ, and his partaking of the salvation which is by him, may be effectually removed.

With this important object in view, let us apply to ourselves a portion of the doctrine adverted to in the preceding pages. God, in his infinite love to mankind, has declared respecting Christ: "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth; (Isa. xlix. 6;) and our Holy Redeemer referring to this divine gift, and describing the cause of the condemnation of those who perish, said "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil:" therefore, that we may not bring on ourselves this condemnation, by our not loving but disregarding and rejecting Christ, under the manifestation of the Light, let a heart-searching examination take place individually, by our conscientious application to ourselves of the following questions: *Dost thou believe in Christ, in reference to his spiritual appearance in thy own soul?* (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) *Hast thou, in the metaphorical language of Scripture, opened the door of the heart unto him, when, by the secret convictions of his Holy Light or Spirit, he has knocked there for admission?* (Rev. iii. 20.) *Hast thou thus received Christ for thy leader,* (Isaiah lv. 4,) *thy baptizer,* (Matt. iii. 11,) *thy high-priest and thy king?* (Heb. ii. 17. Isaiah xxxiii. 22.) *Is it become thy daily concern to obey him in all things, avoiding that in every part of thy conduct and conversation, which the light manifests to be evil,* (John iii. 20, 21,) *denying thyself and taking up the cross, in respect to every pursuit and gratification, which this divine Monitor does not allow, however earnestly pleaded for by thy natural inclination and desires?* (Luke ix. 23.) And finally, *dost thou witness, through submission to the baptizing operation of his Holy Spirit, the work of regeneration begun, and gradually progressing in thy soul?* (John iii. 3.)

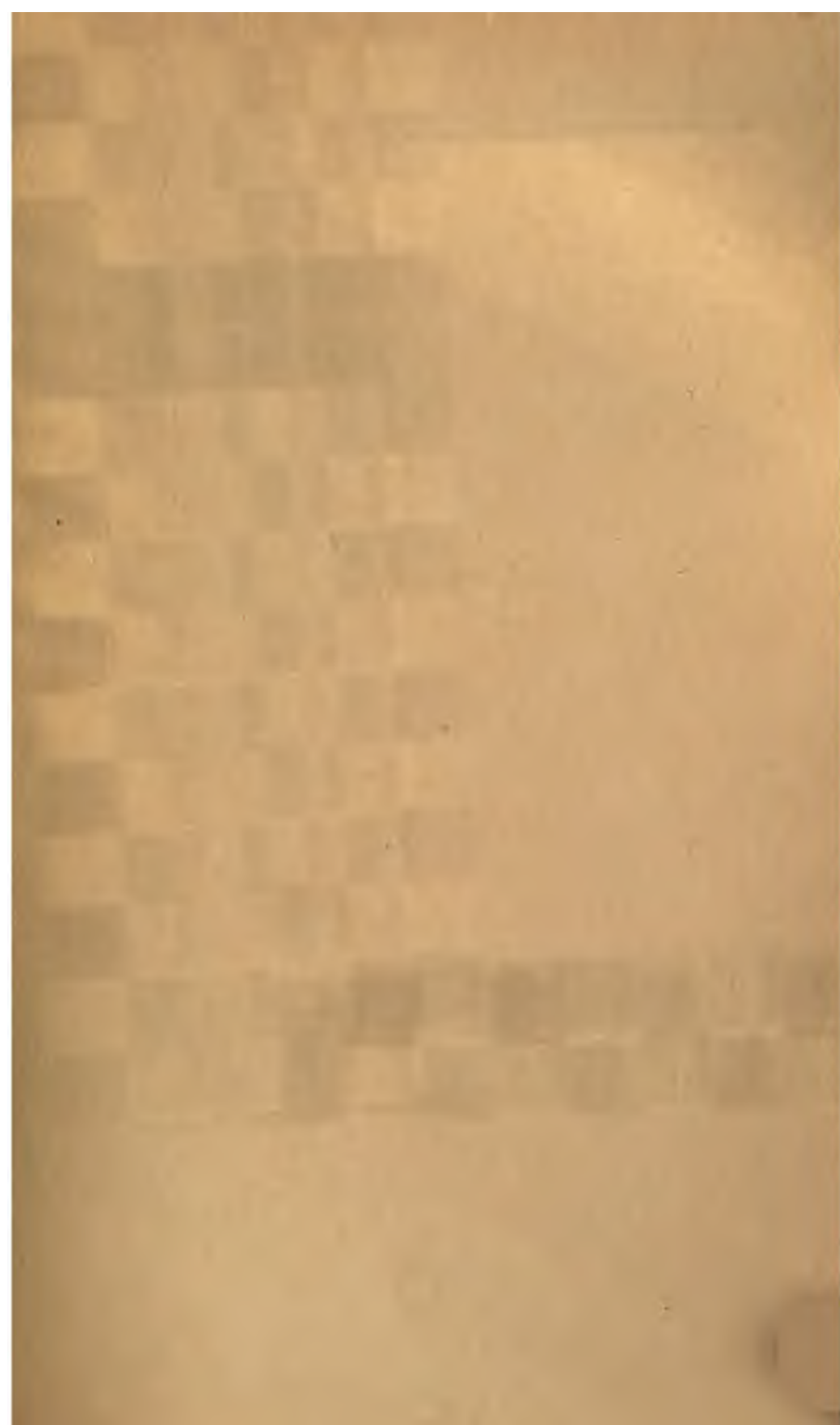
To promote this great work of reformation among pro-

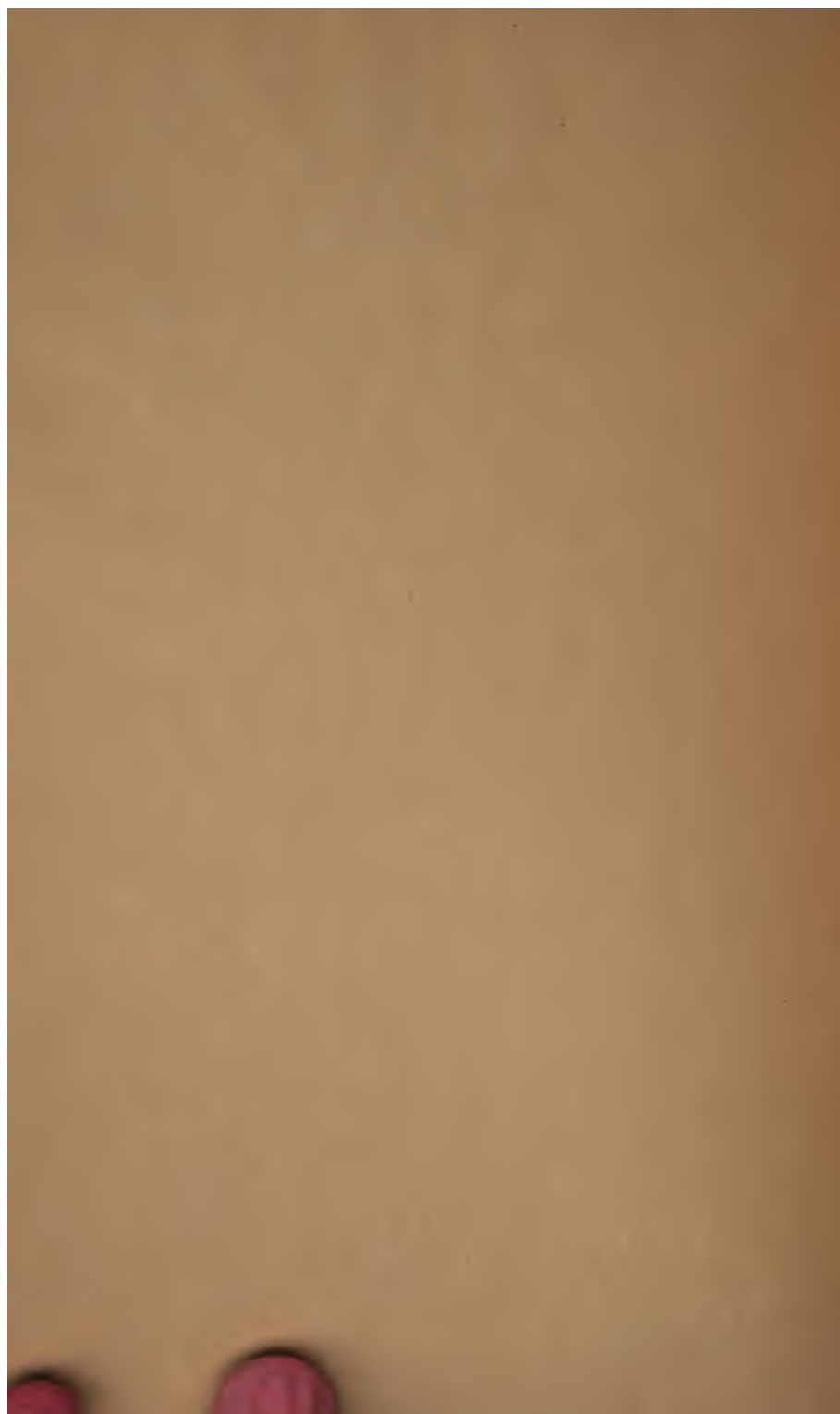
fessing Christians of every denomination, is the object which the writer has in view: he fervently desires that the awakening visitations of divine love and mercy may be extensively embraced,—that great may be the number of those, who, feeling the burthen of sin, and their need of a Saviour; and under the conviction that the form of godliness without the power cannot save them; will be prepared to accept the gracious invitation, “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” As a general solicitude prevails thus to come unto Christ, to submit to his yoke, and to learn of and to be baptized by him, the fruit of his Holy Spirit will be abundantly produced; genuine Christianity will again shine forth in her ancient beauty; the name of Almighty God will be glorified by the consistent conduct and conversation of professed Christians; and in their religious assemblies, the will and wisdom of man being no longer suffered to predominate, but being kept in due subserviency, the eternal light, life, power and wisdom of our God will be exalted in dominion over all.

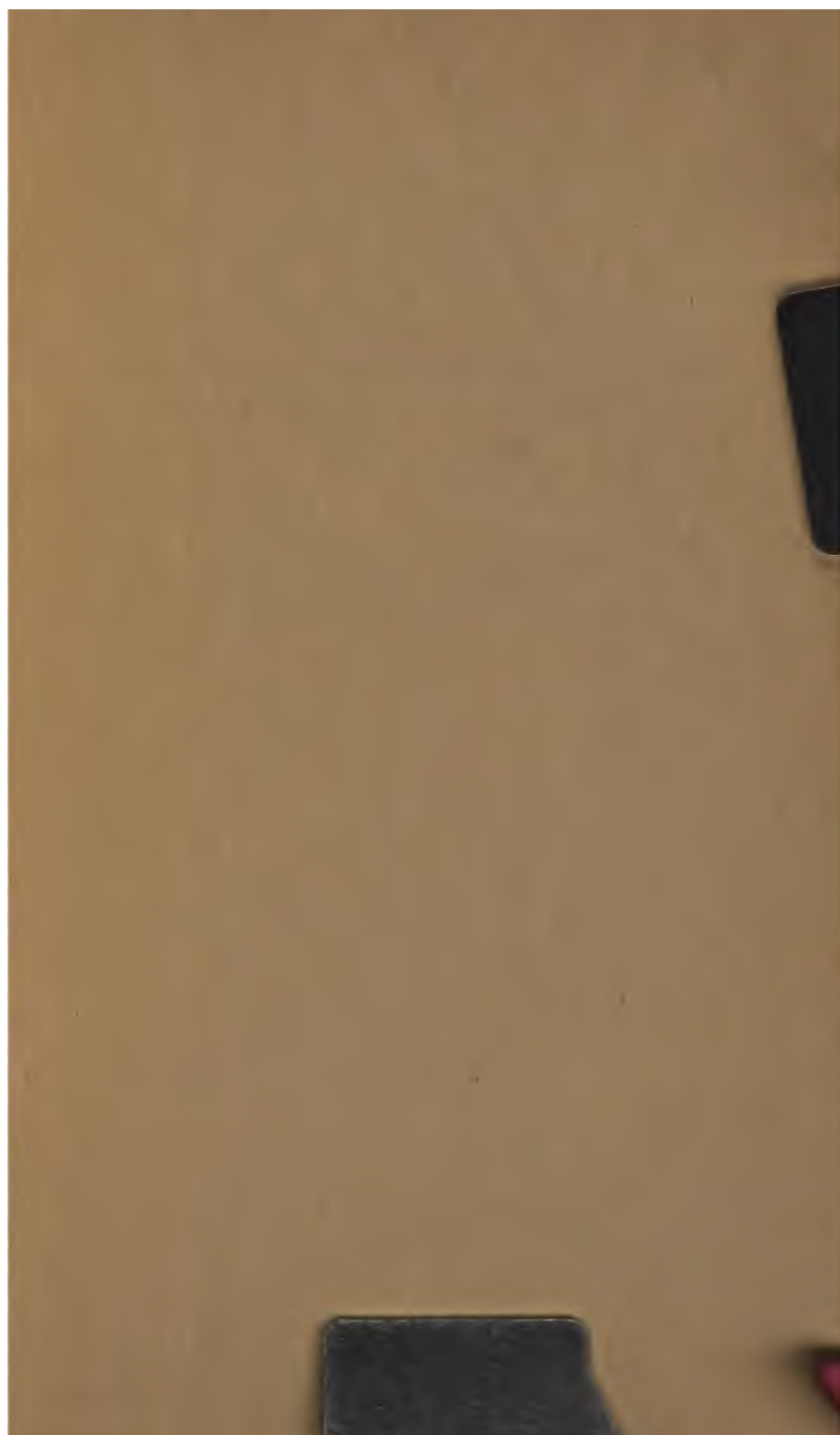
‘Even so, Holy Father, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.’

THE END.

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